

Claims:

1. A method of delivering a plurality of data messages to a customer, comprising the steps of:

if the customer is idle, delivering a message directly to the customer;

if the customer is busy receiving another message, determining a precedence level for a received message, and storing the received message in storage associated with that precedence level;

if the customer is busy receiving said another message, notifying the customer that said message is being received by a system for storing received messages; and

subsequently, when the customer is idle, delivering messages to the customer from storage of higher precedence level before delivering messages from storage of lower precedence level.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein certain classes of messages also have a preemption level, wherein if said customer receives a message with a preemption level, the reception of said another message is interrupted if the precedence level of the received message is above a precedence level of said another mess-

age currently being received by the customer.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the customer is first notified that the reception of said another message is about to be interrupted, and can signal that the customer does not wish to receive the preempting message before reception of said another message is completed.
4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:
requesting immediate delivery of said received message.
5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of notifying comprises the step of:
notifying only if the received message is at or above a pre-determined precedence level.
6. A method of processing received voice calls, comprising the steps of:
determining whether the received voice call is one of a class defined by the receiving customer to be a call for which routing features are to be ignored; and
if so, completing the call ignoring routing features for the call.
7. Apparatus for delivering a plurality of data messages to a customer, comprising:

means, responsive to recognizing that the customer is idle, delivering a message directly to the customer;

means, responsive to recognizing that the customer is busy receiving another message, for determining a precedence level for a received message, and for storing the received message in storage associated with that precedence level;

means, responsive to recognizing that the customer is busy receiving said another message, for notifying the customer that said message is being received by a system for storing received messages; and

means for, subsequently, when the customer is idle, delivering messages to the customer from storage of higher precedence level before delivering messages from storage of lower precedence level.

8. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein certain classes of messages also have a preemption level, wherein if said customer receives a message with a preemption level, the reception of said another message is interrupted by said mean for delivering messages if the precedence level of the received message is above a precedence level of said another message currently being received by the

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customer.

9. The apparatus of Claim 2, further comprising means for notifying the customer that the reception of said another message is about to be interrupted; and means for signaling that the customer does not wish to receive the preempting message before reception of said another message is completed.

10. The apparatus of Claim 1, further comprising means for requesting immediate delivery of said received message.

11. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the means for notifying comprises means for notifying only if the received message is at or above a pre-determined precedence level.

12. Apparatus processing received voice calls, comprising:

means for determining whether the received voice call is one of a class defined by the receiving customer to be a call for which routing features are to be ignored; and

means, responsive to said means for determining, for completing the call ignoring routing features for the call.